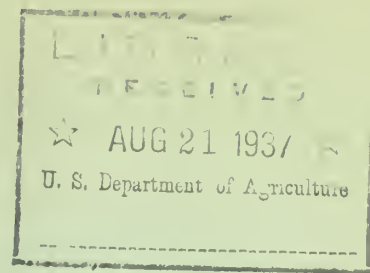


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A ROUND-ROBIN CIRCUIT LINKING FARM & HOME BROADCASTERS

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GET ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR LISTENERS

By Sam Carson, Assistant
Extension Editor, Tennessee

When a city editor tells a newspaper reporter to "window dress" a story, he means for that reporter to apply his knowledge of showmanship and thus rescue a mass of facts, perhaps interesting enough to a few, so that it appears as interesting material for the many.

We refer to this window dressing as "popularizing" otherwise technical subjects. Actually, we are breaking our material down to the level of commercial competition, of reader interest or listener interest. For this window dressing is the basis of all showmanship, whether it is by an advertiser, a public agency, or whatnot.

You have noted that in the most popular radio programs, the more effective advertising plugs are made as straight talks, condensed but packed with information about the product or service of the concern sponsoring the program. It is easy to imagine the unanimous twisting of dials, if a sponsor should buy a quarter hour period and hire a speaker to extol the merits of soap, or sirup, or snowshoes.

(Continued on page 2)

U. S. D. A. - 1945

1. The most important thing to remember is that the forest is a living organism. It is not just a collection of trees, but a complex system of interlocking parts. The forest is a living organism. It is not just a collection of trees, but a complex system of interlocking parts. The forest is a living organism. It is not just a collection of trees, but a complex system of interlocking parts.

GET ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR LISTENERS

(Continued)

Now this isn't an argument to enter the entertainment field, or even to change our basic plans of presenting programs. When we present Farm Flashes, the Housekeepers' Chats, or variations due to local setups, we are giving educational programs. Essentially, we are teacher-demonstrators. And we must work from that basis.

This is not theory in Tennessee. One station alone has a daily average listening audience of 105,000. Furthermore, this program is for rural women and is nothing more or less than a straight, fifteen minute talk, given at 9:15 o'clock each Saturday morning. We use no material save the regular U.S.D.A. talks, plus Extension Service news and information. Probably our main contribution is that we work awfully hard to make these talks as timely as possible. Two Saturdays before last Thanksgiving, we went through our Extension Service cook book and took over the U.S.D.A. Housekeepers' Chat, and Miss Helen Cullens, District Two agent, who gives all the talks, went on the air fifteen minutes with these recipes. The next week we heard from all over the State, from Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Rosebud Indian Reservation up in South Dakota.

Now we make no effort to get outside the State over WSM. In fact, we try to stay in, but 50,000 watts are 50,000 watts, and they reach out. The point is, as we see it, that had this sort of talk been given in January, there wouldn't have been several hundred women even in Tennessee interested enough to write us for publications.

We follow this same method up for Christmas, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, before Farmer's Institutes, before and during summer camps, through the gardening and canning seasons, and so on through the year. To give variety, we plan this year to switch in interviews, with home agents, a home demonstration club member or so, 4-H club members taking part. But we find that in the main, it's when we tell about approved practices on the farm, in the garden and inside and outside the house, that they write in.

When it comes to getting a response from men, it's a different sort of grey horse. We have Farm Flashes going on the air from stations at Bristol, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Nashville, Jackson and Memphis. Once in a blue moon somebody writes, or kicks about something he heard during the Farm Flash program. Usually, however, nothing happens, whatever the announcement. But this does happen: County agents get calls just after Farm Flash announcements. Maybe it is for information about farming practices, or a farm bulletin. Or it might be we slip in an announcement about a meeting, farm institute or cooperative sale. Folks attend, and admit they heard about it "over the radio." In other words, our response is mostly indirect.

At present, we are conducting a poll in the main listening area of WSM, regarding interviews, the addition of educational material on general subjects, and digests of general news topics, not as regular features, but as relief to the basic program of direct, rural interest talks.

(Continued on page 3)

[illegible]

VIEWS OF IOWA LISTENERS

Surveys conducted in Dubuque and Winneshiek counties among listeners interested in County Agent's broadcasts and syndicate Farm Flash programs furnished by the Extension Service indicate that the broadcasts are a valuable method of reaching farm people with daily news and information (says the Iowa Extensioner.)

Although the returns were, of course, much too small to constitute an accurate sample, the two surveys do give some indication of the interest in the programs.

In Winneshiek County, representatives of rural young peoples association interviewed neighbors in a county service project, obtaining answers to a questionnaire. In Dubuque County, County Agent Frank R. Kerrigan mailed questionnaires to all farmers in the county.

One hundred fourteen replies were received. Thirty-eight farmers reported that they heard the county agents' weekly broadcasts regularly. Fifty-eight listened more or less irregularly and 18 said they did not hear the program. What is perhaps more significant, 29 farmers said they had written or called at the county agent's office for bulletins or other material offered in the radio talks.

In Winneshiek County, 7 women out of 35 interviewed reported listening regularly to the weekly broadcasts by Miss Helena Dilger. Fifteen listened irregularly and 13 not at all.

Farmers and farm women were also questioned on the kind of material they wanted to hear in the agents' broadcasts. The farmers were strongly in favor of practical information-- on livestock, feeding, crop production, insect control -- and explan-

ations of AAA, REA, and other Federal programs. Winneshiek County women gave a similar report with particular hints on home making and recipes being most popular.

Farm Flash programs (presented by station announcers) were not as popular as those given by the agents. Twenty-three farmers reported that they listened regularly to the Flashes, 61 irregularly, and 18 never. Nineteen agents are now broadcasting regularly on 6 commercial stations in Iowa. These stations use the Farm Flashes on days the agents do not broadcast.

GET ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR LISTENERS (Continued from page 2)

Radio stations, county agents, and other extension workers, and farmer listeners alike are joined in one matter. They prefer informative talks, by persons in authority, on improved farming practices. But they want marketing news primarily. This we supply over some stations, combining the marketing reports with farm flashes.

The order of preference follows:

Marketing news.

Information of seasonal nature.

Advice on marketing, not immediate.

Announcements on meetings, institutes, livestock sales.

Women listeners, going entirely by their written vote given voluntarily, prefer these subjects in the order named:

Food -- recipes of all sorts.

Seasonal talks covering all phases of the home.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which are arranged in two columns. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are written in a more formal, printed style. The list includes names such as "John Doe", "Jane Smith", and "Robert Johnson", along with their respective addresses.

SERVING FARM PEOPLE BY RADIO

NORMAN, OKLAHOMA -- Cleveland County, Oklahoma, farmers and farm women are "cashing in" on opportunities provided them through Farm Fireside Radio Chats offered by the county's two agents, and the agents themselves are reaping benefits from providing the programs.

For the past three years, the agents have offered twice each week a series of programs over WNAD, the University of Oklahoma broadcasting station. Standard time for the broadcasts is from 7:30 to 7:45 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays. County Agent L. H. Stinnett, and Miss Opal McNees, Home Demonstration Agent, cooperate in providing the program features.

Recent surveys revealed that approximately 40 percent of the farm homes in the county are contacted by radio in the farm chats.

Mr. Stinnett and Miss McNees believe the programs provide at least four distinct services for farmers:

1--They are provided with information on current developments in the farm world.

2--The Extension Service program is constantly before those who take advantage of the fireside talks.

3--Because farmers speak from time to time, and information regarding them is used, others in the county are given an opportunity of knowing what their neighbors are doing.

4--Since the advent of the soil conservation program and adjustment programs, farmers are kept in constant touch with developments along these lines.

Mr. Stinnett remarks that "There's a personal satisfaction for Miss McNees and myself in providing for the farmers and farm women in this county the best programs possible and the latest information on farm developments. We try to be alert at all times and on our toes in an effort to present the kind of programs best adapted to our listeners. In other words, the programs bring out the best in us. That's one of the main benefits we, as agents, derive from the talks."

Various types of programs have been given since the radio work was started. Chief among these have been provided by county 4-H clubs, district agents, the county agents, progressive farmers in the county discussing farm questions, representatives from the conservation camp at Purcell, 18 miles south of Norman, and by Extension specialists.

Cleveland County officials have shared their time with McClain County Agents (Miss Ivy Parker and Mr. Ed Davis) during the past year so both counties may have like opportunities.

L. R. Combs is the author of a circular "Extension Work Via Radio" recently issued by the Iowa Extension Service. The new publication is 26 pages mimeographed, about half devoted to examples of radio talks. It contains chapters on The Purpose of Extension Broadcasting, Radio's Limitations, How to Write the Radio Talk, The Radio Dialogue, News-Type Broadcasts, Talking Before the Microphone, What to Broadcast, Promoting Listeners Interest, and Checking Listener Interest.

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